

DETAILED ACTION

1. A preliminary amendment was received from the applicant on December 8, 2005.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-6 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lavorata (US 5,630,740).

Lavorata discloses the same life raft system as claimed, as shown in Figures 1-3, that is comprised of a container, defined as Part #4, that contains an inflatable life raft, defined as Part #2, that is enclosed within a flexible watertight protective bag, defined as Part #13, and one or more emergency packs, defined as Part #14, that are also sealed in auxiliary flexible bags, as shown in Figure 1. During inflation of said life raft using a provided inflation system, defined as Part #3, said container separates to allow deployment of said life raft and said emergency packs. Said container, which is cylindrical in shape and has a circular cross-section, as shown in Figure 1, is also provided with a hatch, defined as Part #9, located on an end wall of said container to provide access to said emergency packs for inspection or replacement, as described in lines 50-57 of column 3.

Lavorata also discloses the same method for servicing a life raft system as claimed, as shown in Figures 1-3, said method being comprised of the steps of accessing an emergency pack, defined as Part #14, through a hatch, defined as Part #9, in a container, defined as Part #4, as shown in Figure 1, removing said emergency pack through said hatch, as described in lines 50-57 of column 3, inserting a replacement emergency pack through said hatch into said container, as described in lines 50-57 of column 3, and connecting said replacement emergency pack to said life raft, as shown in Figure 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lavorata.

Lavorata, as set forth above, discloses all of the features claimed except for the specific use of threaded bolts to connect a hatch to a container.

The examiner takes official notice that the use of threaded fasteners in the form of bolts or screws for connecting one member to another is well known in the art.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, to utilize threaded fasteners to connect a hatch to a container in

combination with the life raft system as disclosed by Lavorata for the purpose of providing a life raft container with a means for securely fastening a hatch member.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 8-13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Switlik et al. (US 6,902,453), Parrott et al. (US 6,709,305), Higgs (US 4,033,002), Pritty (US 2,968,820) and Mellon et al. (US 2,851,078) disclose life raft systems having a container and an inflation means.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication from the examiner should be directed to Exr. Lars Olson whose telephone number is (571) 272-6685.

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May 21, 2008

/Lars A Olson/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3617